

Sharing the Road With Bicyclists

Throughout Texas, springtime weather brings out bicyclists of all ages. Unfortunately, when bikes and cars share the road, collisions are far too common. In Texas, in 2005 (the latest available data), 46 cyclists were killed in traffic crashes, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. A disproportionate number of Texas bicycle crashes involving a motor vehicle occurred in the Houston area, according to data compiled by the Houston-Galveston Area Council.

In February, AAA Texas, in partnership with the City of Houston and REI, launched an initiative to educate motorists and cyclists on ways to safely share the road. The Watch for Cyclists campaign includes TV and radio public service announcements and is offering Watch for Cyclists reflectors, available at AAA Texas offices in the Houston area and in Houston-area public libraries (while supplies last). The campaign also promotes 10 tips for keeping both cyclists and motorists safe. Following are several to keep in mind, regardless of where you live.

- When cyclists are sharing the road, check blind spots and mirrors before maneuvering.

- Slow down. Speeding reduces your ability to see and slows your response time.

- Before pulling out of driveways and intersections, look in every direction.

- Be especially alert at dusk and at night, when visibility is reduced.

- Before turning right, check your mirror. If cyclists are on your right, allow them to pass before turning.

- Before turning left, check for oncoming cyclists and let them pass.

- Give at least five feet clearance when passing cyclists.

- When you park on the street, use your side mirror to check for approaching cyclists before opening your door.

Bicyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as motorists. With more awareness, we can all share the road safely. To learn more about the campaign, go to www.publicworks.cityofhouston.gov/bikeways/watch_for_cyclist.htm.



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